



# The CASE of the City of London,

In Reference to DEBT to The ORPHANS, and Others.



Y the Custom of *LONDON*, confirmed by divers Acts of Parliament, the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen are Guardians of the *ORPHANS* of all Freemen of the said City, and have the Care and Government of Them, their Estates, and Marriages; and have a Customary Jurisdiction by the Name of *The Court of Orphans*.

By that Custom the Executors of every the said Citizens are bound, either to find sufficient Sureties to the Chamberlain for the *Orphans Portions*, who is a sole Body Corporate for that purpose: Or otherwise, to pay the same into the Chamber of *London* as a Deposit, to be kept for them until Security be found, or their respective Portions become due; and such Maintenance to be allowed to the *Orphans*, as the Custom directed, by the Name of *Finding-Mony*.

In regard the Estates of the Citizens were mostly Personal, and liable to be wasted by Widows and Executors, That Court hath been found by the Experience of many Ages, to be a most necessary and effectual means to preserve the Estates and Children of the Citizens; and the Protection and Preservation of the Persons, Estates and Marriages of many Thousands of *Orphans*, are owing to the Care of that Ancient Court.

The *CHAMBER* of *London* (being the Receipt of all the Cities Revenue, and the Treasury wherein all the Portions of *Orphans* were to have been deposited, as in a Sacred Treasury) had for many Ages a most unquestionable Credit, very Great Sums of Mony being continually Receiving in, and Paying out: And the Chamber had Sufficient to Answer to every *Orphan*, and all other Debts, until about the beginning of the late Troubles between *England* and *Scotland*.

But about the Beginning of those Troubles, divers Debts owing to the City, amounting to near *Thirty Thousand Pounds*, became desperate: And about the same time, the City in compliance with His late Majesty King *Charles* the First, having Advanced to him, and Expended for him, about *Forty Thousand Pounds* more, the City became Indebted in the Year 1638, in

*Seventy Thousand Pounds.*

Ever since the said Year, the Chamber paid Interest for the said Debt, and the then Government of the City very Improvidently allowed the Executors of the Citizens, to bring into the Chamber *Orphans Portions* upon Interest, which ought to have been only deposited by such Executors as could not, or would not give the Chamber Security for them: And by that means a great Cash was kept in the Chamber, of which no profit was made; and out of the same, Interest was constantly paid for the said Debt, as also for the said Portions: So that by a true Account, Mony being taken in at Interest to pay Interest, the said Debt of *Seventy Thousand Pounds*, in *FIFTY AND FOUR YEARS*, hath increased to above Five times that Sum: And the Interest paid also to *Orphans*, contrary to the Custom of the City, hath made up the rest of the present Debt.

The Cities Ancient great Revenues, given by Benefactors for the support of its Government, might in some measure have prevented the vast Encrease of its Debt; If the Troubles of the Kingdom had not happen'd, and the Rebellion of *Ireland* first broke out, and afterwards a Civil War here ensued, whereby the City was constrained (by the Powers unto which they were Subject) to lay out several Sums of Mony upon divers Occasions, as the prevailing Powers Commanded. All which, together with their great Losses and Diminution of their Revenue by the *Irish Rebellion*, Augmented their Debt, and whilst the City laboured under the intollerable Burthen of Interest for *Orphans Portions*, Unduly and Improvidently (as is before mentioned) brought upon them, the dreadful Fire of *London* happen'd, and consumed most part of the Cities Revenue, which consisted in *Houses*.

Nevertheless the Credit of the Chamber continued, and Payments both of Principal and Interest were answered until the *Quo Warranto* brought against the City, to destroy their Being: Which not only put them to great Charge, but ruined their Credit, that all Payments into the Chamber ceased, and the Body Corporate and all its legal Powers (until this present happy Revolution) was taken to be utterly destroyed: Whereby the Duties of Waterbailage and Tronage, or Kings Beam, and many other ancient Duties and Profits belonging to the Corporation, were in a great measure lost, and the Interest of a vast Debt in the mean time continually growing, the City became disabled to answer the same.

Notwithstanding for the Reasons aforesaid, the City hath not received any *Orphans Mony* into the Chamber since *Christmas* 1683; yet since that time, there has been such Care to get in Debts owing to the City, and to improve their Revenue, That they have paid to all *Poor Orphans* (whose Portions in the Chamber of *London* exceeded not *Fifty and Five Pounds*) Their Whole Debt, amounting to

*Ten Thousand Six Hundred Seventy Three Pounds, Two Shillings and Eight Pence;*

And have further Paid to the *Orphans*, and Others, for Interest,

*One Hundred Thousand, Five Hundred and Fifty Pounds.*

But the Present Court of Aldermen (finding it impossible for the Government of this City to be supported under the burthen of so great a Debt) have thought it their Duty, from time to time, to apply themselves to the Wisdom of the Parliament, for proper Remedies to such a Grievance: In regard it is the Case of the Capital City of the Kingdom, in whose Support and Welfare the whole Nation is much concerned; And this Court of Aldermen humbly hope, that it will be rightly understood, that the Debt has not been incurred, nor augmented by their Default, Negligence, or Expence; They serving the City freely at their own Cost, without Eating or Drinking at the Cities Charge, as has been untruly suggested.

And they have been and are uncessant in their Cares and Endeavours, to make the utmost Improvement of all that belongs to the City, only for the Benefit of the *Orphans*: And are now humble Solicitors to the Parliament, not for any Interest or Benefit of their own; but for the Relief of the Distressed, and the Quiet and Support of the Government.

And they shall humbly crave leave to shew unto the Parliament (if they may be admitted thereunto) wherein they conceive this City to be wronged and deprived of divers Ancient Rights and Customs belonging to it: Which being Restored and Established by Act of Parliament, will greatly help towards the Payment of the said Debt, or of a reasonable perpetual Interest for the same, as the Wisdom of the Parliament shall think most convenient.